United Nations A/51/PV.22

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

22nd plenary meeting
Friday, 4 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Address by Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mkapa: Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Ambassador Razali, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Your election is a fitting tribute to your distinguished career in diplomacy, an expression of confidence in your abilities and a reflection of the high regard in which you and your country, Malaysia, are held by the international community. You have our confidence, and I can assure you of Tanzania's full support and cooperation as you guide the deliberations of this session. I commend also your predecessor, Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, who very ably presided over the historic fiftieth session of the Assembly.

My appreciation goes also to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a distinguished son of Africa, who for the past five years has worked tirelessly to enhance the image of the Organization as well as its ability to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving international environment. He has provided dedicated leadership at a particularly difficult time in the history of the United Nations, enduring often unwarranted personal criticism even as he was operating in a situation of diminishing resources on the one hand, and escalating, often conflicting, expectations on the other hand.

My predecessor in office stood at this rostrum exactly two years ago and, in bidding farewell to the United Nations, spoke of the political transition then under way in my country and of preparations for the first multi-party elections in Tanzania in over 30 years. He underlined his intention to bequeath to the people of Tanzania a functioning democracy leveraged upon a shared national culture of political accommodation and tolerance. Today, I am proud to be here as a product of that process of transition, to reaffirm our commitment and abiding faith in the United Nations in its endeavour to promote international peace and security as well as economic and social development throughout the world.

The United Nations has, since its inception, expanded its role in the international system tremendously, becoming a major player in national development and international cooperation. The various summits that it has organized in recent years, coupled

96-86385 (E)

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with its numerous activities covering the entire spectrum of political, social and economic spheres, in all corners of the world, is testimony to the critical role of the United Nations in resolving the national and international problems facing mankind.

The United Nations has helped maintain international peace and security at very critical times. It has overseen the delivery of peoples and nations from the shackles of colonialism and institutionalized racism to independence. As a result of these efforts, membership has increased almost fourfold. The ideals of freedom and justice and human rights are understood by most of the world, even if they may not always be observed. The United Nations has built a common global culture of shared values, and it has also helped in promoting development, building social and economic infrastructures and much more.

Today, the United Nations stands at a crossroads. New challenges, not least those brought about by a rapidly changing international environment, keep demanding its undivided attention. The challenge before us, as we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, is to invigorate and reinforce this Organization, drawing upon the collective resources and knowledge of our world and acting in partnership.

Likewise, the ideal we all share for participatory democracy in each Member country needs to find expression on the international plane as well. In the course of the last few years, we have agonized over the process of reform within this Organization. We all want an efficient and revitalized United Nations — one that is more attuned to the realities we live with and capable of meeting the new challenges we face. We must reform its methods of work and bring greater institutional and policy coherence into the Organization. Adjustment and realignment are necessary processes for the renewal and continued relevance of this Organization. Tanzania salutes all those individuals, institutions and Governments that have contributed to this process of review.

It is our hope, however, that any reform will preserve and enhance the basic principles underlying the United Nations. We want reform — but only the kind of reform that will ultimately strengthen the hand of our Organization in promoting its ideals. We want greater transparency in the work of our institutions, and the reinforcement of the principles of sovereign equality of States and justice. We need democratization of our institutions, and greater balance in representation on the Security Council between the developed North and the developing South.

We cannot, however, expect the United Nations to be, and do, all this and more without giving it the means with which to work. Meeting our financial obligations to the Organization must, therefore, complement our demands upon the Organization and serve to demonstrate our commitment to the ideals it seeks to promote.

Just as we have the right to applaud the achievements of the United Nations, we must also have the courage to concede that it has yet to make a dent in the scourge of abject poverty that afflicts the greater part of its membership. This is where we must now direct its attention and resources. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen was a good starting point, and we must implement the letter and spirit of the commitments made there. Unless the issue of poverty is addressed comprehensively, we cannot achieve meaningful and enduring peace. We must restore the development agenda to the heart of the philosophy and work of the United Nations.

The world is largely considered peaceful because there has not been a third world war. Yet, for those who are menaced by regional conflicts, for the victims of oppression and injustice, and for those who subsist in unremitting poverty amid a world of plenty, their world is at war. Taken together, these people account for the largest part of the world population, and the United Nations must give them the attention they deserve today. Our United Nations cannot speak of a peaceful world when the future of our children — and their right to grow up as children — is undermined by conflict and poverty, and when urban squalor is breeding anarchy in local communities. Peace must be pursued in a comprehensive manner, taking account of these equal, if not greater, threats to peace within societies and among countries.

Our collective shame at poverty amid riches must find expression in our joint action to promote development. Today, the developing world is bombarded by many development initiatives. We are urged to work harder, to liberalize our economies, to cut Government spending, to institute sound macroeconomic policies, to promote the private sector and a host of other measures. Invariably, our countries have done so, quite often at great social expense, the magnitude of which developed countries would not countenance in their own economies.

We have done so in the knowledge that ultimately it is we who must take the bull by the horns. Indeed, we accept that we must be more competitive in the market place and bring greater efficiency to Government. We

need to use our resources more rationally; we need to fight waste and corruption in Government; we need to streamline our bureaucratic processes, liberalize our economies and open our markets to international commerce. That is why most of us are signatories to the establishment of the new world trade regime under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. Yet our capacity to access, and benefit from, the global markets — the markets of the developed world — is constrained by our underdevelopment, the protectionist policies of the industrialized countries, and the ever-deteriorating terms of trade.

Unregulated market forces will not help the very weak, poor and vulnerable countries, whose special circumstances and needs must be attended to. For us, that is the priority agenda for the World Trade Organization, not the introduction of new issues before we perfect the system we have now. The Ruggiero plan to extend tariff-free access in the markets of industrialized countries to products from developing countries is welcome and deserves wide support.

We now need a mutually beneficial creative partnership between the developed North and the developing South. Sustainable economic recovery and growth in the South is beneficial to the North as well. Only a prosperous South will be a more meaningful player in global commerce. We shall then be able to buy more from the North, thus freeing the conscience of the developed world from the unending obligation to extend charity, and control illegal immigration. This creative partnership must also recognize the interdependent nature of our world and how ultimately we affect each other. To help the South recover is not an act of simple charity but of building the foundations for a more secure and stable world. We made a call for action at the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD IX) at Midrand in South Africa earlier this year. We must reiterate that call today.

Tanzania, like the rest of the developing countries, is determined to face its responsibilities for economic and human development. We cannot, however, make meaningful progress when the millstone of external debt continues to hang around our necks, stifling recovery and growth. The question of the unbearable external debt must be addressed urgently if our creative partnership against global poverty is to bear fruit.

Many proposals for debt relief have been discussed over time. We recognize and appreciate these initiatives, including the recent proposals for extraordinary debt relief measures for a selected group of severely indebted countries. The fact remains, however, that no comprehensive action is imminent save for limited measures taken unilaterally, on a case-by-case basis. Urgent, coordinated and comprehensive action remains necessary to alleviate this debt burden, including the cancellation of the debts of least developed countries, whose servicing obligations gobble up their entire earnings. Only then can we hope for an economic turnaround for them. It is the duality of debt cancellation and access to markets that will enable countries like Tanzania to benefit in a liberalized world market place, and hasten the pace of social and economic development.

Another heavy burden for developing countries, especially those without fossil fuel sources of energy, is the cost input of energy for development. In this connection, I wish to hail the World Solar Summit, held on 16 and 17 September 1996 in Harare, which helped to focus world political attention on the urgent and imperative need to provide reliable, sustainable and clean sources of energy to all the people of the world, including to the 400 million homes and the 2.4 billion people in the developing world who currently have no access to electricity. We all know that, without electricity, no rapid development of those communities will be forthcoming.

The Harare Summit agreed on a framework for a 10-year solar energy programme. We must all give it the political support it needs and deserves if it is to be effective. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, we all agreed that failure to develop sustainable and clean sources of energy would result in problems for all of us, rich and poor alike. Deforestation in Africa, Latin America and Asia will affect the countries involved and not involved alike. As long as 92.8 per cent of the energy requirements in Tanzania are met from wood fuel, there is no way that the Government can protect the natural forests unless alternative sources of energy are available at affordable rates. It is in the interest of all humanity and of future generations to facilitate the development of alternative, affordable, sustainable and clean sources of energy for everyone.

Tanzania is concerned at the lack of progress in the implementation of the United Nations peace plan for Western Sahara. The international community cannot and must not retreat from this unfinished business. We must reaffirm the inalienable right of the Sahraoui people to self-determination and independence and, to that end, support the holding of a free and fair referendum. We

urge the two sides, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Polisario, to initiate direct talks, which would create a climate of confidence and permit the resumption of the implementation of the settlement plan.

We wish to keep our hopes alive with regard to the situation in the Middle East and earnestly call for faster and strict implementation of the peace accords. The Israeli Government has a particular responsibility in this respect. We reached a time when we thought that our dreams for the peaceful coexistence of the Palestinian people and the Israeli people were on the verge of coming true. We commend all those who have been instrumental in promoting the peace process. We urge greater restraint on all sides, which must accept that the secure way to sustainable peace and security is through negotiation.

I shall now turn to the Burundi crisis. We see our role in Burundi as one not of benevolence, but of duty — duty to help our brothers and sisters there to step back from the brink of mutual destruction to the middle ground of dialogue, political accommodation and national reconciliation. We began our efforts within the Organization of African Unity and gradually turned over the task of bringing the political forces in sustained dialogue to former President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, within the framework of the Mwanza talks. Not only was the military coup of 25 July 1996 an illegal and unconstitutional act; it also undermined the efforts in the region to promote dialogue and restore peace to that most tormented country. The coup is unacceptable to all regional leaders and we demand a return to legitimacy and a negotiated political settlement that will guarantee democracy and the security of minorities.

In order to speed up the process of compliance, the region has imposed economic sanctions on Burundi. Those sanctions will remain in place until all the conditions set at Arusha are met by the military rulers in Bujumbura. These are not unreasonable conditions. They are the restoration of the National Assembly, which is a democratic institution of legality that derived its mandate from the Burundian people; removing the ban on political parties in the country; and the resumption of unconditional political negotiations with all the parties to the conflict. We have, at the same time, made it clear to the Burundi people that the sanctions are meant only to secure the compliance of their military rulers with these conditions, and nothing more. Once this has been done, Tanzania, the region and, indeed, the international community have all reiterated that they are prepared to resume their assistance and cooperation in the process of restoring peace and rebuilding that country. We can all pledge our help, but the challenge of making peace is one that only the Burundian people and those who claim leadership of that country can shoulder. The onus of bringing peace to their county rests squarely upon their shoulders. The key to a sustainable solution is in their own hands. We can only help.

At the same time we, the neighbours and the rest of the international community, have an inescapable responsibility to save the Burundian people from self-destruction. We cannot stand by and watch the perpetuation of killings, the steady degeneration of the security situation and the catastrophe they portend for the country and the subregion.

As we seek to help the Burundian people retrace the path of dialogue, we remain preoccupied by the fragility of the political situation in the Great Lakes region as a whole. While Rwanda is steadily progressing along the path of recovery, the wounds of war and genocide have yet to heal. That country needs the solidarity and support of the international community.

One of the serious consequences of conflict in the region has been the massive human displacement, and refugees now constitute a tremendous burden for the neighbouring countries. Tanzania is currently hosting over 1 million refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. The implications of their presence in such large numbers within limited localities have been tremendous in terms of the destruction of the environment, increased insecurity and criminality, and the social and economic burden they have imposed upon the host communities. The traditional hospitality of Tanzanians towards refugees is wearing very thin indeed.

We appreciate the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian agencies in offering protection and succour to the refugees. What they have done is very useful, but it is not enough to offset the burden that these refugees place upon our communities. We call upon the international community, in the name of human solidarity, to redouble its assistance to meet the urgent needs of these refugees, while at the same time addressing the long-term effects attendant on hosting them. Above all, we must help both Rwanda and Burundi to address the root causes of these human displacements. The ultimate goal must be the voluntary repatriation of the refugees to their home countries. To us, the creation

of an environment that will facilitate such a process of repatriation is now a priority.

Whether in Liberia, Somalia or elsewhere in the world, we see the need for courage and statesmanship to defeat the temptations of political unilateralism and promote dialogue and greater human solidarity. The courage to rise above deep-seated prejudices and fears — the courage to depart from traditional rigidity that has made conflict endemic in some parts of the world — is the key that will open up a new era of dialogue, political accommodation and national concord. We have seen how such courage and statesmanship can reverse long-standing hostilities and build on the realism of our shared destiny as human beings. The Middle East, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa and Angola are cases in point. Difficulties remain, but we have crossed the Rubicon and, with determination, we can maintain a steady pace towards peace in these and other areas around the world. The United Nations played a key role in this task. It will have to play an even greater role in consolidating the progress towards peace.

The end of the cold war did not, unfortunately, usher in the spring of collective peace and the blossoming of the flowers of international cooperation. The world is still divided — even if not on ideological lines — between those who are armed and those who are unarmed. Vast nuclear arsenals remain and their technological improvement continues unabated. The hopes for collective peace run the risk of being thwarted by the unilateralism of those who are armed with the most deadly weapons. My country is concerned about the vertical proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the unremitting desire of those who have them to rationalize their possession. This undermines peace.

Since the coming into force two years ago of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we have witnessed the establishment of the various institutions envisaged in the Convention. We are pleased that, at long last, there is positive movement towards ensuring the regularized use of the oceans and their resources to the benefit of all people the world over. The Government of Tanzania attaches great importance to ensuring that the make-up of the International Seabed Authority in its formative years is so structured as to facilitate the carrying out of its responsibilities in the manner envisaged in the Convention and implementation Agreement of 1994.

The establishment of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea has added a fillip to the Convention, and the election of its judges last August was another milestone in the work of the United Nations. In this connection, we express our appreciation to the States Parties to the Convention on the Law of the Sea for electing a Tanzanian, The Honourable Joseph S. Warioba, as one of the judges of the Tribunal. We congratulate all members of the Tribunal on being entrusted with such an historic mission.

The founding of the United Nations was inspired by the human solidarity which the world sought to promote five decades ago. It is that solidarity which our nations gathered here last year to commemorate. What holds our nations together, despite their diversity, is the common bond and solidarity we feel for each other as human beings.

Today, more than ever before, we need that solidarity in order to deal with the myriad problems we all face together: the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, peace and security, justice and human rights, disarmament and the environment, international terrorism and drug trafficking and many others. All require joint and coordinated international action. Those more powerful amongst us can try to solve these problems unilaterally, but in order for their efforts to bear fruit, they too need the cooperation of everyone. That is why I invite this Assembly to embark on a mission to rediscover human solidarity and to build structures for global partnership, the better world which the founding fathers of this Organization set out to establish 51 years ago.

As an African leader, I wish to end my speech by commending and supporting the United Nations Secretary-General for the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa he launched on 15 March of this year, which seeks to provide coordinated action across the entire United Nations system over a 10-year period to address the unique development needs of the African continent. It is my hope that coming in the wake of the Copenhagen Social Summit, it will benefit from that Summit's commitments and create the kind of impact that has long been missing in previous summit declarations and plans of action.

Africa is a continent with an ancient and rich history. It is richly endowed with human and natural resources. I have great hopes for Africa and, being part of its new leadership, I pledge to work with anyone who shares my conviction that Africa is positioned for political and economic renewal, reform and

reconstruction for development. Together, we can realize the dream of a more peaceful, a more developed and a more respected continent. Together, we can realize the dream of a world closer than ever to the ideals set out in the United Nations Charter over 50 years ago.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United Republic of Tanzania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by The Honourable Mr. Vaughan Lewis, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia.

The Honourable Mr. Vaughan Lewis, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia, His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Vaughan Lewis, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Lewis (Saint Lucia): One year ago, representatives of Member States gathered in this hallowed Hall and sang songs of praise in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of this venerable Organization. One year ago, we faced the challenges of a changing international system and the dawn of the new millennium with courage and hope and in the belief that its noble ideals would guide the actions of States, great and small, in their relations with their fellow Members.

But now that the cheering and shouting have died and the vivid memories of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations have started to wane, small countries like ours, Saint Lucia, are forced to face the realities of survival — realities far harsher than what the bliss of that anniversary promised.

It will be difficult to forget the lofty principles expounded during the anniversary or the excitement of celebrating the historic liquidation of apartheid in South Africa and the restoration of democracy in Haiti. But the speeches of this Assembly had hardly faded, the lights of this Hall hardly dimmed, when my country Saint Lucia and its sister islands of the Caribbean began to feel the full blast of international hostility towards the arrangements for the marketing of our main export commodity, the banana, in the European Union, arrangements which are enshrined in the treaty establishing the Fourth Lomé Convention between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

The reality of size and vulnerability always creates an awareness, a perception and a kind of resilience in small States that make them philosophical about adversity. Consequently, we will continue to support the high ideals of this institution, but today we must focus on the hard options presented to us by the myopia of some large trading nations.

At the historic fiftieth session of this Assembly, Saint Lucia took the opportunity to spell out to the nations of the world the very serious consequences which would befall our small Caribbean economies if certain countries pursued their intention to challenge the European banana regime by invoking Section 301 action at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The United States of America itself is now pursuing this action in response to an application by certain American multinational companies involved in the trade, and other large banana-producing countries have followed their lead.

The battle is now fully engaged within the World Trade Organization, but the conditions of war are anything but equal and the playing field is anything but even. For example, at the behest of the complainants, the small countries of the Caribbean have been denied full participation in the hearings of the WTO panel, despite the fact that we are the ones who will be most affected by the WTO ruling, whatever that may be.

The diplomatic war being waged against the marketing arrangements of our main export commodity

in the name of free trade emphasizes to small nations the monumental insensitivity of some of those participating in the process of globalization and trade liberalization now sweeping the international community. In a process that ignores the special circumstances of the small and the vulnerable, nations like Saint Lucia and regions like the Caribbean can quickly become marginalized.

Let it be understood that we are not against the process of change in world trade, the globalization of the world economy or the economic integration of continents, a process currently under way. We do not wish to be Luddites in our view of the evolving international system and thus we welcome these directions. But, on behalf of the peoples whom we represent, on behalf of the peoples of all small States, we have the right to point out the dangers these trends pose for small, developing economies if compensating mechanisms are not put in place. We need to tell the world that these trends, these changes in international economic affairs, have not lessened the vulnerability of small developing States, but have in some respects accentuated them. We need to remind this body that, as the international community seeks to fashion a new global economic system, it is imperative that it not lose sight of the special needs of small States, particularly small island developing countries.

The untrammelled pursuit of free trade for the sake of free trade cannot be the guiding philosophy of our Member States. Unbridled free trade which relegates some Member States, and in particular those with small open economies, to the position of suffering spectators cannot be acceptable. It is even less acceptable when we realize that some of the very nations that are championing the case of unrestricted trade liberalization do not themselves scrupulously observe that philosophy. Some of them grant huge subsidies to their farmers in order to allow them to continue in production, yet they complain that our small farmers are not efficient producers.

Consequently, it is incumbent on the international community to make provisions for the special needs of small States in this rapidly changing international system. In the creation of free-trade areas that span continents and integrate hemispheres, there must be special provisions for the very small economies of our countries, particularly in regions where there are small island developing States. In that regard, we welcome the fact that, in the discussions on the proposed free-trade area of the Americas, a working group on smaller economies has been established to facilitate the participation of the small economies in that process.

For despite the changing features of the international system, the forces that threaten the existence of these States have not altered. Small island States are still very vulnerable, for example, to natural disasters. Some of the economies of our fellow Member States from the Caribbean have yet to recover from the effects of the ravages of last year's hurricanes. And in the island of Montserrat, we have a classic example of the magnitude of the damage which a natural disaster — in this case persistent volcanic activity — can wreak on small island developing economies.

The plight of that small Territory is an extreme but tragically powerful symbol of why the special needs of small island developing States cannot be ignored as the international community seeks to define new rules and economic relationships for the next millennium. The international community and international economic institutions must therefore bear in mind that, while they have categorized some of us as middle-income developing countries and therefore as no longer requiring concessionary aid flows, the economic indices utilized to arrive at these classifications cannot mask the continuing reality of the vulnerability of these countries.

We will, however, continue within the severe limitations of size and resources to diversify and restructure our economies, to increase efficiency and productivity and to adapt to the new realities. We will rely on the support of States Members of this Organization in this regard.

There are other States in the Caribbean whose particular situation also deserves the special attention of this body. Saint Lucia once again urges the international community to increase its technical, economic and financial assistance to Haiti to foster development and stability in that sister country of ours. The end of the United Nations Mission should not diminish international development support for Haiti. This is even more urgently needed now to maintain and strengthen the gains achieved in the restoration of what is still a fledgling democracy and to enhance its fragile stability.

Again, Saint Lucia joins its Caribbean colleagues in calling for an end to the economic blockade of Cuba. Three decades of denial have not achieved democracy. The economic embargo against Cuba is a policy which can hardly be called relevant in this era and it is therefore time to try the more effective alternative of dialogue, discourse and openness.

In the wider international community, we are heartened by the new impetus given to the revitalization and development of Africa and encourage Member States to continue to support this initiative. But we are saddened by the persistence of ethnic disturbances in some areas of that continent — ethnic troubles which only serve to impede the very development process which Member States are trying to promote. We therefore urge the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa to develop mechanisms for conciliation with regard to these conflicts.

Saint Lucia also wishes to express its deep concern at the recent revival of conflict in the Middle East. Is it not time to end the anguish, to stop the pain? Is it not time to halt the shedding of the blood of the ordinary people of these lands? Is it not time to bring a permanent peace to a land that means so much to so much of mankind? But the path to true peace can only be through dialogue and conciliation and we urge all parties to return to this road, for anything which is not built on that foundation will not stand.

While Saint Lucia continues to promote the unification of China, we still hold the view that Taiwan should be given the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the work of the United Nations. Taiwan is a vibrant and growing democracy, capable of meeting its obligations to this institution. As a highly developed economy, Taiwan is also capable of contributing to the growth of other smaller, less developed economies of the world. At a time when the Powers that have traditionally assisted the economic development of our countries have significantly reduced the level and quality of their support, new sources of assistance should not be ignored. We are confident that this body can find a creative mechanism through which Taiwan can be involved in the programmes of the Organization. That involvement in the work of the United Nations should in no way preclude unification.

We hope that this fifty-first session will not conclude without significant progress in correcting the inequitable composition of the Security Council. Saint Lucia will continue to work within our regional and other groups to achieve the goal of strengthening the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, institutionalizing the process of briefing and consultation and developing greater transparency and predictability.

As a small nation caught up in the dynamics of globalization and trade liberalization, Saint Lucia looks eagerly and hopefully to the principles and ideals of the United Nations to offer some comfort, some protection and some measure of security in our uncertain entry into the new century. All the indications that herald the approach of this new age seem to tell us that small nations should find their path to development through the process of integration.

We as a nation have a solid track record in attempting to forge deep and meaningful links between all States members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community. In both organizations, we continue to build viable mechanisms and institutions which will achieve a meaningful consolidation of the various units of the Caribbean Community. We have progressed even further and participated in the launching of a brave initiative, the Association of Caribbean States. This Association ignores the barriers of race, language and culture and seeks to unify all countries which border and are part of the Caribbean Sea.

We urge this Organization, through its various agencies, to continue to provide support for the regional integration efforts of developing countries. On many occasions in the past, it has been the work of some of the United Nations agencies which has helped sustain some of these regional economic integration schemes and given them the impetus to move forward. For its part, Saint Lucia will continue to toil in the cause of the closer union of the peoples and States of the Caribbean because this is the only logic for our survival. This is the path to the enhancement of the quality of life of our peoples.

The plight which our country faces as a result of the manipulation of the European banana market regime and of the unconscionable pressures exerted by the activities of some States on that market, is desperate. We wish to remind the Assembly that we are relying on the principles and ideals of this body to stand firmly in the corner of the small and vulnerable and to frustrate the designs of some multinational corporations which threaten our livelihood. We reiterate our call to the United Nations to develop a framework of international review and regulations regarding the activities and policies of transnational corporations, which are assuming leviathan proportions in world trade.

I commend you, Sir, on your elevation to the presidency of the General Assembly at fifty-first session and pledge Saint Lucia's support for the successful execution of your enormous responsibilities. My country also pledges with customary diligence to assist the United Nations in implementing the goals of the Charter and

fostering the spirit of freedom and independence which the fiftieth anniversary year of the Organization emphasized. Our small size will not be a deterrent in our pursuit of democracy and peace.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Fiance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Vaughan Lewis, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning and Development, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and Information of Saint Lucia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão.

Mr. Simão (Mozambique): On behalf of my delegation, and on my own behalf, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I am convinced that your qualities of a gifted diplomat devoted to the cause of peace and understanding among peoples will ensure a successful outcome of our deliberations. I pledge my delegation's full support as you discharge your noble responsibilities.

I would like to seize this opportunity to commend the brilliant manner in which your predecessor, Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, presided over the proceedings of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Let me also pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his continued contribution and personal commitment to the ideals of international peace and security.

We celebrate today the fourth anniversary of the establishment of a peaceful Mozambique after a long period of uncertainty in our history. It has been a period of great challenges and sacrifices, but also of great excitement for all Mozambicans. With peace, we are gradually healing the wounds caused by the war and our young multi-party democracy is flourishing and consolidating its roots. The Assembly of the Republic, our Parliament, has been meeting regularly, symbolizing our collective desire to work together for the consolidation of peace, national reconstruction and democracy. Similarly, efforts are being made to implement the Government's five-year programme, in which the reduction of absolute poverty, with emphasis on education, health, rural development and job creation, continues to be our major objective.

At the same time, preparations are being made with a view to beginning next year the holding of municipal elections, thus complementing the process initiated in 1994 with the holding of the first multi-party general and presidential elections. In view of financial and other constraints, the Government anticipates that municipal elections will take place on a gradual basis. However, the final decision will be made by the Assembly of the Republic itself, following the completion of the ongoing debate on the subject.

What is important in our view is that elections take place, for they represent an opportunity for the people to choose their local representatives, identify and solve local problems and define their own needs and priorities. The Government is also addressing, as a matter of urgency, the establishment and strengthening of all the different tribunals envisaged in the Constitution, with a view to enabling the normal functioning of the judiciary system as an important step forward in the efforts to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and respect for individual rights and freedoms.

Furthermore, we continue to be fully committed to ensuring public safety and security. To this end, my Government has recently submitted to donor countries a project proposal in order to begin the process of upgrading the technical capacity of the police, thus enabling that institution to deal more effectively with crime prevention, control and other challenges. These include continuing the search for and destruction of arms throughout the country and dealing with transnational crimes, particularly drug trafficking and money laundering.

Furthermore, demining continues to be one of my Government's top priorities. For us, demining is not an end *per se*. Rather, it is a process which we regard as an integral part of the overall national development process. Where possible, it has been our policy to stimulate the launching of agricultural production and related activities once demining is completed. However, given the magnitude of the land-mine issue in Mozambique, resulting from many years of conflict, additional resources are needed effectively to address this problem in the years ahead, in particular within the framework of strengthening the national capacity for demining.

From this rostrum, I would like to express my gratitude to all those countries and organizations which have contributed to the demining programme in Mozambique. We look forward to continuing work together with a view to eliminating these horrible weapons not only in Mozambique, but also in all countries affected by this evil. Accordingly, and in line with my last year's statement before this Assembly, my Government reiterate sits full support to the call for an international agreement against the production, stockpiling and use of anti-personal landmines.

Recently, my Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) concluded the repatriation and resettlement of Mozambican citizens who had sought refuge in neighbouring countries during the armed conflict. This programme, initiated as a result of a memorandum of understanding signed in March 1993 with UNHCR and subsequent agreements, has been regarded as one of the biggest and most successful repatriation programmes ever undertaken by UNHCR. Thanks to this programme, around 1.7 million Mozambicans have safely and voluntarily returned to their places of origin. We are now proud to say that there are no more Mozambicans living abroad as refugees.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

However, the challenges before us are immense. We are aware of the difficulties facing this segment of our population and the long road still ahead before we can declare them economically safe and ready to live on their own. This is where the assistance of the international community is most needed and appreciated.

With the end of the repatriation process and the resettlement of these populations, there has been significant progress in agricultural production. As a matter of fact, recorded agricultural output in certain areas of Mozambique this year is the highest since independence. The main problem we face now is that of the financial capacity to buy and store adequately the surplus of this production. We need support to build warehouses within the framework of the food security programme.

Like many other developing countries, Mozambique has been undergoing a structural adjustment programme since 1987. The core objectives of the programme were, *inter alia*, to create and adjust the country's macroeconomic policy, ensure a correct legal and regulatory framework for the development of a strong market economy, provide a transparent and accountable policy framework aimed at promoting investment, allocate adequate budgetary resources for social programmes, create the necessary conditions for the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and support good governance and political stability.

After almost 10 years of implementation of this programme under the most adverse conditions, some progress has been achieved. Nevertheless, the overall objectives, including specifically the upgrading of the living standards of the population, are still far from being achieved. In some cases living standards of working people have, in fact, deteriorated in recent years, which may erode the political support needed for the continuation of the reforms.

As of next year, Mozambique will have to start meeting its debt-servicing obligations to multilateral institutions, as this category of debt has not been eligible for rescheduling so far. The debt burden, coupled with very restrictive monetary policies and related measures pursued in connection with the structural adjustment programme, will certainly have a serious negative impact on the performance of the national economy. Unless measures are taken to address this situation, it will be very difficult for the country to sustain the envisaged political, economic and social targets required to uplift the living standards of the people. The situation of my country's indebtedness is a critical one, indeed, as it has increased by about six per cent during the last two years. In 1994, debt servicing alone absorbed about 93 per cent of the country's total export earnings and represented about 28.6 per cent of gross domestic product. This scenario is likely to remain, under the prevailing circumstances, for the next few years. Therefore, my Government supports the view that a comprehensive effort should be made to effectively address the external indebtedness of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries undertaking painful structural adjustment programmes and whose growth prospects continue to be severely undermined by this burden.

In order to address official bilateral debt problems, the Naples Terms, adopted by the Paris Club, in favour of the poorest and most indebted countries should be expeditiously implemented. At the same time, we believe non-Paris Club creditors which have not done so should also consider taking appropriate relief measures to alleviate the suffering of debtor nations. Measures announced at the recently held Lyon Summit could not have been more timely. We look forward to welcoming their early implementation.

As I speak on this subject, I would like to launch an emphatic appeal for a closer partnership between debtors and creditors. We have recently been pleased to note that, at the political level, there appears to be a growing understanding of developing countries' concerns over the issue of the external debt crisis. We would therefore be deeply appreciative if this understanding were translated into tangible results and if the subsequent technical discussions held following political consultations were much more fruitful. Regrettably, this has not always been the case. A comprehensive approach to assist least developed countries through a flexible implementation of existing instruments and through finding new mechanisms, is necessary. These include improvements in capital and investment flows and an increase in real terms of the official development assistance to least developed countries, particularly in Africa.

To this end, we call upon donor countries, international financial institutions and United Nations organs and specialized agencies to effectively participate in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s, the mid-term review of which was held in September last year.

Similarly, my delegation welcomes the recently launched United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, for it brings a new impetus to the international community's awareness of the necessity to bring about a meaningful solution to African problems. Additional efforts should be made to prevent repetition of past experiences during the implementation of similar important initiatives, by ensuring a successful implementation of this one. The recent mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa has highlighted the positive changes made in the right direction during the last few years on the African continent. These trends should be supported and encouraged by the international community.

In this regard, my Government hopes that the report being prepared by a group of experts led by Ms. Graça Machel, in conformity with the General Assembly resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993, will contribute significantly to drawing the international community's attention on the fate of children victimized by armed conflicts in the world, particularly, in Africa.

The current session of the General Assembly offers a unique opportunity for a collective review of the issue of conflict resolution in many parts of the world. With respect to Angola, the recent summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) organ on politics, defence and security has expressed concern over the slow progress and apparent stalemate in the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. The summit expressed, *inter alia*, deep regret over the absence of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) from the meeting and made a strong appeal to UNITA to fulfil its commitment within the deadline established by the Lusaka Protocol and those of Security Council resolution 864 (1993).

Mozambique, along with other SADC countries, is making its contribution to the smooth progress of this delicate process. The settlement of the conflict in Angola will contribute decisively to the materialization of strategic goals set forth by SADC and allow our region to embark on the process of regional integration and to dedicate our efforts to the well-being of our peoples.

Within the recently created Lusophone Community, or Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, we are also working hard to encourage the peace process in Angola. In doing so, we aim to consolidate the historic and cultural ties which unite the seven countries that have Portuguese as their official language, thus creating the necessary conditions for a more fruitful cooperation among them.

We are encouraged by the recent progress in Sierra Leone and Rwanda and look forward to a positive outcome of the crises in those countries. However, we remain concerned at the prevailing volatile situations in Burundi, Liberia and Somalia. We welcome all initiatives aimed at finding the needed political settlement of the crises in these African countries.

The recurrence of such long-lasting conflicts remains a serious challenge to the international community as a whole and also to the efforts within the framework of the recently established Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. My delegation wishes to commend all the countries that have lent their support to the functioning of the Mechanism, thus enabling Africans to take a much more active role in searching for solutions to the conflicts on their continent.

The recent outbreak of violence in the Middle East is a matter of grave concern to my delegation. This violence, if not averted urgently, will be a serious setback to the commendable progress made in the quest for a political settlement to the long-standing conflict in that region. We call upon all the parties concerned to

exercise maximum restraint and to display the needed political maturity in the implementation of the mutually agreed commitments in the interest of all the peoples of the region. In this connection, we are encouraged by the dialogue initiated in the recent summit in Washington between the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the Palestinian Authority with a view to putting an end to violence and resuming the peace process.

We have also followed the developments regarding the issue of East Timor. In making an assessment of the progress made so far, one cannot fail to register disappointment over the slow pace of talks between Indonesia and Portugal. Nevertheless, my delegation wishes to encourage both countries to assume their responsibilities with more vigour, with a view to finding a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to this issue, bearing in mind the need to allow the people of East Timor an opportunity to exercise their political rights, including the right to self-determination.

Time and again, virtually all Member States have emphasized the critical need to undertake reforms within the United Nations so as to ensure greater effectiveness in its work and to fulfil the sacrosanct principles enshrined in its Charter. The needed reforms within our Organization should not be regarded as an end in themselves. They should, *inter alia*, pave the way for the active and global participation of the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in the work and procedures of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind the shared responsibilities of these countries in the economic and social challenges facing today's world.

In this reform process, the strengthening of the United Nations system, which does not necessarily mean downsizing, is of paramount importance. The revitalization of the role of the Economic and Social Council is long overdue to allow better coordination and effective and efficient management of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Reforms should also reflect the dynamics of international relations and the growing need for enhanced democracy, equitable geographic representation and the changes in the composition of its membership since the establishment of the United Nations 51 years ago. Above all, they should ensure the needed legitimacy, transparency and efficiency of its decisions.

In this connection, my delegation shares the frustrations expressed by a number of delegations regarding the lack of tangible progress within the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. Since the beginning of its procedures, important and interesting ideas have been advanced in this regard. Therefore, nobody can deny the arguments calling for an expansion of that body. Lack of progress on the enlargement of the Security Council will only undermine the ability of the United Nations to discharge fully its obligations and limit the confidence of international public opinion on the future of our Organization. It is only by addressing the issue of enlargement and by each one's fulfilling its financial obligations that we can reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and expect a well-functioning and dynamic United Nations ready to face the challenges of the next century. What is necessary is a genuine political will to change the status quo, which has favoured a limited number of Member States to the detriment of the legitimate interests of the vast majority of its membership.

In its 51 years of existence the United Nations, despite numerous difficulties during this period, has been able to achieve its crucial objective of halting the emergence of a third world war. Therefore, it must be allowed to continue to preserve the gains already achieved and draw lessons from mistakes of the past so as to ensure the feasibility of its mandate, as we approach the twenty-first century, in the maintenance of international peace and security, in monitoring the implementation of important decisions taken in the economic, social and environmental fields and in playing a more dynamic role in the quest for the development of our countries.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of India, His Excellency Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral.

Mr. Gujral (India): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Razali on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. He is not present here, but I would like to say that he is no stranger to India. We are fully cognizant of his sagacity and skills and repose our confidence in his ability to successfully guide the General Assembly during its fifty-first session. May I also express my delegation's warm appreciation for the presidency of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for a most

productive tenure as President of the Assembly in its historic, landmark fiftieth year.

Six years ago I had the privilege of addressing the historic forty-fifth session of this Assembly. We rejoiced at the end of the cold war and believed that the animosities, rivalries, suspicions and intrigues that had bedeviled the past would now be overcome and the problems of the world and their solutions could be addressed with greater, perhaps pristine, clarity. We have welcomed the reduction of global tensions and the opening up of new economic possibilities between nations.

However, we cannot say that the new dawn has led to a new and genuinely cooperative web of kinship and collaboration. Regional conflicts and tensions continue to occupy us. Development problems remain acute, and there is less sensitivity to the genuine needs of struggling nations. The voice of the rich and powerful nations rings louder than ever, while the developing world feels itself more marginalized and ignored than ever.

In these circumstances, it is even more necessary to strive for a genuine spirit of joint international endeavour in addressing the world's problems. The United Nations is the foremost embodiment of multilateralism. No single nation or even group of nations today can expect to find solutions to the world's problems, nor are many problems amenable to solutions in isolation. Global problems require global institutions and global solutions. This role and duty can fall only to the United Nations.

We are concerned at unilateral actions and at the evident decline in the commitment to obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. International cooperation is necessary to meet the vast development needs of the developing countries, to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and to fight terrorism and crime. The United Nations system, under which sovereign nations have joined together to achieve their common objectives, is the universal framework for international cooperation. The Charter of the United Nations is the real basis for renewing multilateralism. India recently joined 15 other Heads of State or Government in stating that

> "either nations move forward to strengthen (multilateralism), or we risk having to face more unilateralism and perhaps conflict and overt disregard of international law and common values".

The United Nations is at a crossroads. Its financial crisis is the result of an unwarranted unwillingness on the part of certain countries to pay their dues in full and on time. Such deliberate targeting of the United Nations represents the most acute threat to multilateral cooperation and can do incalculable long-term damage.

Beyond the financial crisis of the United Nations itself is the critical issue of financing global cooperation. While the world remains confronted with enormous problems of poverty, malnutrition, disease, ecological degradation and waste, the will to contribute is on the decline. Development assistance is at its lowest level in decades. Negotiated replenishments of multilateral development funds are not being honoured.

It is unfortunate that voices continue to be raised questioning the role of the United Nations in the economic growth and social development of developing countries. It is necessary to restore to the United Nations, in the coming century, the important role of eradicating poverty and all the ills associated with it, of promoting development and achieving social progress and better living standards, with more freedom for all.

For this purpose, the multilateral economic system needs to be reformed and the partnership of the United Nations with other relevant institutions must to be strengthened in order to achieve greater economic growth, integration and sustainable development. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions need to develop an effective partnership. While India welcomes the initial, tentative steps towards such a partnership, effective economic leadership requires that we work to ensure a much closer relationship between global economic institutions than has been the case so far. Indeed, there is no alternative if the financing of long-term global cooperation in economic and social fields is to be assured. We need larger volumes of financial assistance, greater predictability of resources and unfettered access to the markets of developed countries. It is also time that we energize our efforts to complete the Agenda for Development and launch an effective follow-up process, including in the context of the recent major United Nations conferences.

India is unreservedly committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. The profoundly humanistic traditions of Indian civilization, with its emphasis on tolerance, harmony, non-violence and the inviolability of the individual, have been consolidated in the Constitution of India, which is indeed a veritable bill of human rights. All human rights are sacrosanct in India, guaranteed by its Constitution, an independent

judiciary, a free press, public opinion vigorously expressed and an independent National Human Rights Commission. To us in India, the human rights of all segments of society are sacrosanct and an article of faith rather than a policy.

We believe that international cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights should proceed within the framework of respect for the sovereignty and integrity of States. We deplore the selective use of human rights issues as a form of political pressure, as an obstacle to trade or as a condition for development assistance. Such actions detract from the moral imperatives of human rights promotion and impede the full realization of the human rights of all people.

Human rights violations take many forms. Among the most pernicious of them is terrorism. Terrorism seeks to exploit the openness and freedom offered by democratic societies to pursue narrow ends through the use of violence. It must be combated by firm action at the national and international level. We are dismayed when we hear certain parties voice concern for the so-called rights of terrorists while ignoring their persistent violation of the human rights of their victims, including the right to life, freedom of expression and the freedom to follow religious beliefs of one's own choice.

India took the lead in raising the issue of terrorism as a threat to human rights almost five years ago. We are pleased that despite initial and sometimes vocal opposition by some western countries, terrorism is now accepted to be the major threat to the enjoyment of human rights today. A number of international declarations have been issued on terrorism such as the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration, and the G-7 Lyons Declaration of 27 June 1996. We are encouraged that the international community now recognizes terrorism as a major challenge to democracy, human rights and peace. In this context, India will pursue its call to adopt a binding international convention to combat terrorism.

Fifty years after the United Nations was established, the threat to humanity posed by nuclear weapons continues unabated. We believe that India's security, as indeed that of all countries, lies in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The only way to achieve this ultimate security is to ban the production, possession and use of nuclear weapons within an agreed time-frame. Partial and half-hearted arms control measures, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), defeat this objective by legitimizing the possession of nuclear weapons and permitting the non-explosive testing of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon countries. India, therefore, cannot be a party to such flawed arrangements.

Let me also emphasize that any effective disarmament regime needs to be universal in its approach and scope. The total elimination of all existing nuclear weapons, as an indispensable step towards general and complete disarmament under strict and efficient international control, is the demand of the entire Non-Aligned Movement, to which we fully subscribe. Partial or regional approaches, as are sometimes put forward, do not serve any useful purpose and can distract us from the accepted goal.

At the same time, India remains committed to participating fully and actively in any negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons and all types of tests, just as it did in regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

India signed and deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction two weeks ago. India regrets that major chemical weapon producers have been slow to ratify the Convention. We urge all those countries which have still not done so to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention and to demonstrate their readiness to move towards banning all weapons of mass destruction.

India will work with all like-minded countries in sponsoring draft resolutions on the establishment of an ad hoc committee under the Conference on Disarmament for beginning negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework. India expects all countries, including those represented in the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which support time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons, to join in supporting such draft resolutions.

India will once again present the draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons at this session of the General Assembly. India believes that the urgency of negotiating that convention has been greatly enhanced by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons.

At the recent session of the Conference on Disarmament, India joined 27 non-aligned and neutral

countries to present a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020. India asks that all countries join us in propagating and promoting this joint proposal, both at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly and in other forums.

India is in favour of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel mines, which cripple or kill a large number of civilians.

The continued credibility of the United Nations requires reform of the Organization to reflect present-day realities. While the membership of the United Nations has increased greatly, the voices of the newly sovereign countries in decision-making in the United Nations remain unheard. There is an imbalance in the authority and weight of structures and organs, just as there is an imbalance in the weight of different countries or groups. The General Assembly, the sole universal organ of the United Nations, needs to find greater resonance in other bodies of the system.

The Security Council must be made more representative in order to enhance its legitimacy and effectiveness. The vast increase in the membership of the United Nations since its founding, especially of the developing countries, must find adequate representation in the categories of permanent and non-permanent membership. A comprehensive proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement for the reform and restructuring of the Security Council is already on the table. India supports the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. We are against piecemeal or temporary solutions which discriminate against developing countries. We believe that the same yardstick must be applied to all countries, developed or developing, from all regions or groups, for induction as permanent members. We believe that under any objectively derived criteria for the expansion of permanent members, India would be an obvious candidate.

Reform and expansion must be an integral part of a common package. The restructuring of the Security Council must give expression to the impulse for reform. The reforms must address not only the failings of the past, but also the needs of the future.

Peacekeeping is a significant area of United Nations activities, very often the most visible symbol of the Organization's presence on the ground. India has participated in over 25 peacekeeping operations on four continents, including some of the most sensitive and prolonged, starting with Korea in 1953 and 1954, and including the operations in Viet Nam, Congo, the Middle East, Cambodia, Haiti, Somalia, El Salvador, Mozambique and Rwanda. Indian peacekeepers are currently in the field in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia and Kuwait. Our participation has not been without cost. We have lost 100 peacekeepers for the United Nations cause. We have also offered a fully-equipped brigade to the United Nations standby arrangement. The performance of the Indian troops has won universal recognition. India is one of the few countries which can sustain large-scale troop commitment over prolonged periods.

Our participation in United Nations peacekeeping does not stem from considerations of narrow gain. We have participated because we have been wanted and because we have been asked, but most of all because of our solidarity and empathy with the affected countries and with the international community, as well as because of our commitment to the United Nations and to the cause of international peace and security.

India has offered its candidature for the non-permanent seat on the Security Council from Asia for 1997 and 1998. Our candidature is rooted in the criteria stipulated in the Charter: the principle of equity, our unwavering commitment to the United Nations, and to the cause of multilateralism, and our 50-year-long contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes and principles of the Organization. India has a unique record of supporting United Nations activities against apartheid and colonialism. We have richly contributed to the debates on development, disarmament and human rights. We seek the onerous responsibility of Council membership convinced of the support of this Assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his successful stewardship during a most difficult period. His services are a distinct asset to this world body.

Let me briefly refer to India's interaction with the world. We have witnessed some remarkable changes in the last few years. New vistas for greater cooperation are now visible. The challenge lies in effectively seizing the opportunities. We attach the highest importance to developing cordial and friendly relations with our neighbours with a view to promoting peace, stability and mutual confidence in the region. We also seek to develop

stronger economic and commercial relations within the region, for all-around prosperity. As current Chairman of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), it will be our endeavour to promote multifaceted cooperation in all spheres.

The economic reforms embarked upon since 1991 have provided India with a new outward orientation that seeks greater integration of India into the global marketplace. Today, India is branching out and adding to the substantive content of its relations with individual countries of the region and beyond, developing and building upon regional cooperation arrangements involving SAARC, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) and the Indian Ocean Rim, to name a few.

Convinced of the need and utility of enhanced South-South cooperation, we accord the highest priority to our relations with Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. We are proud to have been associated with Africa and its causes in the United Nations since the inception of the world body. We appreciate the role played by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has striven to find regional solutions to African problems. Its efforts must be supplemented by the United Nations. The scramble for Africa in the nineteenth century was for African land and resources. We hope that the closing years of the present century will see a scramble to redress African problems, the genesis of which largely lies outside the region. The United Nations must lead international efforts to meet Africa's needs and aspirations.

We are deeply concerned at the recent serious incidents of violence in the West Bank and Gaza and by Israeli authorities' opening of a tunnel beneath Haram Al-Sharif — the Temple Mount — in East Jerusalem, which resulted in the tragic loss of several innocent lives and large-scale injuries following violent clashes. The current situation underlines the need for immediate and effective measures to end the violence and to create a climate that would enable purposeful negotiations based on a recognition of the underlying causes of the conflict. These developments also serve to emphasize the need to build further on the agreements and understandings already reached.

In the wave of the recent political changes in the Middle East, India is encouraged by the reiteration by all parties of their continued commitment to the Middle East peace process based on the framework established by the Madrid Conference. However, we are concerned that these reaffirmations do not appear to have manifested themselves in commensurate progress in the peace process. India urges all parties to intensify their efforts towards realizing the mutually agreed objectives of the Middle East peace process, keeping in view that achieving durable peace and stability in the Middle East requires solving the Palestinian issue.

India has ties dating back to early history with Afghanistan, a country with which we also share bonds of kinship, culture and religion. We are deeply saddened by the continued violence and loss of life in that country. India stands for the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. We urge all Afghan parties to resolve their differences through early peaceful dialogue and negotiations. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his special representative to bring about a solution in Afghanistan.

The Non-Aligned Movement figures firmly in India's world view and constitutes an important plank in our foreign policy. We remain firmly committed to the philosophy and values of the Non-Aligned Movement. For us, non-alignment means independence of thought and autonomy of choice. It also means working in cooperation with the largest number of countries. Last year's non-aligned summit in Colombia reinforced our faith in the ability and resilience of the Movement, its responsiveness to change and its effectiveness in today's global situation. India will be privileged to host the next ministerial conference of the non-aligned countries in New Delhi in 1997.

India is a progressive country charting a balanced course between economic growth and social justice, and science and tradition. It is committed to the values of peace, non-violence, coexistence, pluralism, tolerance and constructive cooperation. Culturally, India is a bridge between traditional cultures and emergent trends. Politically, India will remain anchored in a pluralistic, liberal democracy that can provide space for all its constituents and internal interlocutors.

Before I conclude, I am reminded of an ancient Rig Vedic hymn which reads:

"O citizens of the world!
Live in harmony and concord
Be organized and cooperative
Speak with one voice
And make your resolutions with one Mind."

May this invocation to harmony, cooperation, consensus and solidarity continue to guide our deliberations and actions.

Address by The Honourable Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The Honourable Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis, His Excellency Mr. Denzil Douglas, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I should like to begin my presentation by congratulating Mr. Razali Ismail on his election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. It bears testimony to this Organization's confidence in and high regard for his skills and abilities. Also, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Freitas do Amaral for the efficient manner in which he presided over the fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations.

At last year's session, I spoke of the faith of the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis in the United Nations as the only global Organization able to balance the interests of the weak against those of the strong. I spoke also of the need for individual countries to work to develop approaches to collective problem-solving and partnership. Saint Kitts and Nevis reiterates this faith, which, I believe, is amply justified.

Very recently the United Nations came to the assistance of my country and made available support and resources to aid the process of constitutional reform, which, hopefully, will avert further fragmentation and preserve the integrity of Saint Kitts and Nevis. I should like sincerely to record my thanks to the Secretary-General for this kind gesture.

I said previously that my Government does not ask for hand-outs. We do not expect charity. Our participation in this forum is the result of our commitment to multilateralism. All we ask for is genuine partnership, opportunity and an environment in which we all can prosper.

My party, while in opposition, developed an action plan for the progressive growth of the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Today, as the duly elected Government, we have readily realized that the problems facing small developing States keep increasing. But this has not diminished our resolve. One year ago, my Government began the difficult and trying task of implementing our policies and devising new strategies to address the stubborn problems facing my country. We recognize that the coexistence in any society of the threat of narco-trafficking, youth unemployment and poverty is a recipe for social chaos. We in Saint Kitts and Nevis are therefore committed to ensuring that the young people inherit a legacy of hope and live in an environment in which dreams are not only kept alive but are realized.

We fully appreciate that the challenges ahead are great, but we also see great possibilities, and we are determined to embrace the opportunities. However, to move our people forward we will require partnership; we cannot do it alone.

To this end, I welcome with enthusiasm the statement last week by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom. I am encouraged by his intervention because it speaks to the fundamental issues that we in small States have for so long worked to bring to the top of the international agenda.

Last year I appealed to Member States to commit to a genuine partnership between the developed and the developing worlds. The developing world — small States in particular — have for far too long been languishing on the periphery of international affairs and are often corralled into the mainstream only when issues of votes or candidatures are at the centre of debates and individual national policies.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom spoke of the need for the developed world to pursue policies that will allow the economies of developing countries to expand through export-led growth and the abolition of barriers to trade in the developed world. I fully support

this call. My delegation would like to see the Bretton Woods institutions come to the aid of small States by creating adequate structures to allow these States to develop economically and participate better in the world system. There must be a period of transition to encourage small States to integrate into the mainstream of international interaction.

We all share a common responsibility to ensure that developing countries are more equitably integrated into the world economic system. We must break the insidious cycle of dependency and replace it with bonds of partnership and cooperation. We are our brothers' keepers. This must be given priority in our national and international policies.

The developed world must avoid outmoded perceptions that suggest that it is best qualified to prescribe strategies for growth in developing countries. Attention will also have to be paid to indigenous priorities in developing countries. I say to the Assembly that there can be no prescription without consultation. Attempts at development without recognizing the peculiar problems of small States and the responsibilities of the developed world will not promote sustainable growth.

We speak repeatedly of hope, and the promise of the new millennium, yet sometimes overlook many of the problems plaguing us today. My Government looks to this new era with great optimism and unbridled hope that we can achieve sustainable development, that sustainable human growth can be realized, and that our people can afford to dream of a life beyond the expectations of their forebears.

However, I fear for our children's dreams in a world where the products of developing countries are discriminated against and dubious tariffs make our goods seem uncompetitive. I see definite cause for concern when friendly countries that are fully cognizant of the need for the limited preferential access our region enjoys, pursue policies inimical to the development and growth of our countries. This strategy is not free trade. I fear for the progress of my people when development is measured in cold statistical terms that ignore social transformation and sustainable development.

I fear for the future of my children if small, vulnerable States such as my own are continuously graduated out of aid-recipient-country status simply because the gross national product per capita is considered high. This policy does not take into account our high per capita cost of infrastructure development; it does not take into account the frequency of hurricanes and other natural disasters, or the diseconomy of scale faced by our small enterprises.

I fear for my brothers and sisters in the Windward Islands, whose very livelihood is threatened and could be seriously undermined by the disputes over Windward Island banana exports. If the economies of the Windward Islands are affected, my country, too, will suffer. Our economies are very closely linked. We share a common currency, a common central bank and, of course, a common future.

It seems that the international community would readily punish growth. Whenever small States experience relative growth, instead of lending further assistance to ensure that they emerge from the quagmire of deepening poverty, necessary resources and support systems are taken away, and these countries find themselves being graduated out of concessional assistance programmes. This is wrong. This is inhumane. When we rob a man of the means to feed and educate himself and his family, how can we expect him to contribute productively to civil society? This is a world of people, and its organization must be about people. Their needs should not become secondary to systems, policies and experiments. Structures should be used to further the goals and aspirations of our peoples despite differences in economies, populations and size. Our peoples all share a common dream: the dream of freedom to chart their own destinies; the dream of self-reliance; the dream of a better standard of living.

On the question of the environment, it is inconceivable that the very countries that agree to contribute to coastal erosion management and fund studies on environmental protection would wish to transship hazardous toxic waste through our waterways. The fragility of my region's ecosystems, the openness of the economies, the overwhelming reliance on food imports, and the susceptibility of the tourism product put us precariously, and, perhaps, uniquely, at the mercy of external forces.

Saint Kitts and Nevis intends to preserve the standard of living we have achieved and to ensure a prosperous future for all of our peoples. My Government strongly urges the international community to respect our determination to make the Caribbean a nuclear-free zone and to keep it free from toxic pollutants. The region already suffers from the consequences of rising sea levels, coastal erosion and the destructive effects of

natural disasters. The catalogue is very long; we cannot add further problems to it.

Small island developing States require committed, long-term assistance in environmental protection. I am convinced that sustainable development and environmental preservation are inexorably linked. We cannot make token gestures of support on one level only to undermine support on another. We need to enforce existing international instruments, promote cooperation and allow the United Nations to play a more central and coordinating role in developing appropriate machinery for bringing together political will and financial and technological resources to guarantee results.

I call on the United Nations to devise a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing sustainable development. Additionally, I urge developing countries to work more closely together to develop indigenous strategies and innovative approaches in order to solve the problems of development.

The plethora of issues which come before the United Nations are critical. Therefore, it is necessary that the United Nations undergo substantive reform that will address resource distribution and the implementation of recommendations. We must be careful not to address reform in a superficial way. We have to commit ourselves to reforms which allow the Organization to respond more effectively to the problems which face Member States.

It is our collective responsibility to restore and strengthen the international agenda of the United Nations and support its role and performance in the social, institutional and economic fields. I believe that the Organization can help to fuse our individual and collective goals. However, Member countries must believe in the international relevance of this Organization.

It is important for us to promote consensus in addressing the important questions of budgetary and administrative reform of this, our Organization.

Irrespective of national ambitions, irrespective of size or resources, the United Nations is the only global institution whose membership gives it the mandate to examine the vast array of problems that affect the entire community of nations.

The work being undertaken to reform the United Nations should be structured in such a way as to eliminate unnecessary wastage and bureaucratic inefficiency. At the same time, we should not use the problems as an excuse to diminish our commitment to the strengthening and re-energizing of the United Nations.

When we look at international affairs, democracy is still one of our most sacred aspirations. But it needs tangible institutional and infrastructural support. My Government welcomes the extension of the United Nations mission in Haiti which we believe is crucial to consolidating and furthering the cause of democracy and human resource development in Haiti. We should not expect to strengthen democracy in Haiti without addressing the systemic causes of poverty, illiteracy and violence and the absence of democratic institutions. The people of Haiti will eventually inherit the rewards of peace when commitment to long-term social, political and economic development is assured. It is unwise for States to use politics and partisanship to impede progress in Haiti. Its people long for an opportunity to become masters of their own fate, and they should be given that chance to pursue their national aspirations.

My delegation welcomes the prospects for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the progress towards implementing the recommendations of the Dayton Accords. We welcome the willingness of the parties to develop democratic institutions, enhance human rights and see to the return and settlement of displaced persons. The situation in this region is still quite fragile. We must continue to struggle for peace, and people must be made to believe that such atrocities will never, ever happen again.

The situation in the Middle East has regrettably taken a turn for the worse. I appeal to the region's Governments to recommit themselves to peace, the only viable option for attaining coexistence, security, stability and genuine progress for all parties concerned. We further urge the Governments to continue to respect the agreements reached and to commit to their implementation. The successes of past years should never be squandered.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis lends its support to the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and commends the work of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in attempting to resolve these challenging and often thorny issues. We also urge all factions in Burundi to give negotiations a fighting chance. Violence breeds violence, but peace gives birth to partnership. Peace gives birth to growth and to economic development.

We have circulated a document which reflects our policy regarding Taiwan. Our policy is to respect the territorial integrity of all countries and to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of all Member States. Because of our traditional relationship with the 21.3 million people on Taiwan, we have come to respect their economic stability and progress. Their growing democracy and their contribution to the developing world have not gone unnoticed.

We believe they have an important and continuing role to play in international development strategies. We are confident that whatever difficulties exist between the Chinese people separated by the Taiwan Strait can be resolved by the Chinese people themselves and in a spirit of fraternity and good will. We urge the international community to be ready, if necessary, to provide the mechanisms to facilitate dialogue and cooperation. Resolution of the stalemate would significantly contribute to the cause of development worldwide and to peace and security in the region.

We look forward to the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. My Government believes that this is a significant step and a triumph for all women worldwide. It will allow them to achieve full equality of opportunity and equitable integration into the mainstream of decision-making and the development process.

We should bear in mind when discussing the question of human rights that we commit a fundamental error by selectively disregarding the right to economic survival and social well-being. When we single out human rights and freedom we do grave injustice to those people languishing below the poverty line, unable to determine the course of their own lives.

Fundamental to achieving tangible results is the necessity of adopting a comprehensive and wholesome approach to human rights. It is not nearly enough to ensure political suffrage and freedom of expression, although these are extremely important, without establishing mechanisms to foster social self-reliance and economic independence. To promote human rights in the wider sense is to complement and consolidate a democratic culture within any given society.

Human rights protection also means protecting the rights of children against hunger, against mental and physical abuse, against prostitution, against trafficking in children and against pornography. Therefore, we must attack the ills of poverty, illiteracy and deprivation and enact punitive legislation. We support the first international conference on the sexual exploitation of minors, held in Stockholm, as a significant step and an important initiative to raise awareness and develop strategies.

In conclusion, I challenge the international community to give effect to promises with solutions and tangible results. If we fail to design appropriate strategies today to address present problems, we are doomed to repeat past mistakes.

The time for action is overdue. Please, we can wait no longer and we must delay no longer.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for National Security, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Planning and Information of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan, His Excellency Mr. Kassymjomart Tokaev.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakstan): I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on his election to his high office. I would like to express my confidence that he will accomplish his important mission honourably.

There is no doubt that the fifty-first session of the General Assembly will go down in the history of mankind as an important milestone on the world community's road to global peace and security. One of the most important diplomatic documents of our century, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has been opened for signing.

On that occasion the President of Kazakstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, made a special statement, which has been circulated as an official United Nations document. The people of Kazakstan, having fully experienced the destructive power of nuclear weapons, resolutely voted to end the testing of these lethal

weapons. In 1991 the President of Kazakstan, expressing the wish of his people, made a decision to shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Thus, Kazakstan had already taken decisive measures to ban nuclear testing five years ago.

Kazakstan is consistent in its policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Recently, we completed the dismantling of the nuclear infrastructure on the territory of Kazakstan, thereby eliminating the capability that was, until recently, the fourth largest in the world.

That is why, when giving their due to all the countries which have trod the thorny path of preparing this Treaty, I believe it is necessary to recognize my country's significant contribution to this extremely important cause.

However, considerable progress in disarmament does not, regrettably, guarantee the stability of the present world order. We still witness some negative impulses destroying the basis of the relationship between the States which united more than half a century ago. We have to admit that with the disappearance of a bipolar world, our planet has not become safer. On the contrary, the potential for global conflict has increased considerably increased. That is why the issue of reforming the United Nations, so that our common Organization can adequately respond to conflicting realities of international relations at this juncture, is becoming ever so urgent.

Reforms are an indispensable element of any system's development. They are even more important in the case of such a universal forum as the United Nations. In his speech at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, the President of Kazakstan underscored the important need to increase the world community's efforts to elaborate a conceptual model of a renewed United Nations. It involves new objectives, tasks and functions of the United Nations of the next century.

The United Nations, being a genuinely universal Organization, requires a special approach. It is important to keep in mind that the United Nations is our common home. We cannot count on hotels in case of emergency. That is why United Nations reforms should be approached from rational positions. We want the United Nations to keep up with the times and to tap the potential for self-improvement and elimination of the vestiges of the past. We want the United Nations structure to be more effective and flexible in dealing with the problems threatening peace and security. Supporting the desire of Japan and Germany to become permanent members of the Security Council, Kazakstan is in favour of an expansion of the Council's non-permanent membership on the basis of an equitable and balanced representation of all regions. All other proposals should also be taken into consideration.

Criticism of the United Nations can hardly be a reason for doubting its ability to function and for shifting all the blame onto the Secretary-General. I am sure that we have not yet fully mobilized the creative potential of the United Nations. This applies first of all to the Charter. We should carefully reread it, taking into consideration today's world order, not to drastically revise, it but to find additional opportunities hidden in this truly comprehensive document. It is our opinion that despite the piles of studies on the legal framework of the United Nations, the Charter itself contains enormous unexplored potential for the renewal of the United Nations. Until the United Nations mobilizes these dormant capabilities it will create the impression of a dormant Organization unable to respond to the challenges of today.

We have to take a closer look at those provisions of the Charter that deal with cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, or, speaking the language of the Charter, with regional arrangements and agencies. This kind of interaction would be extremely effective for the development of an early warning system and preventive diplomacy. Besides, active cooperation with regional organizations would be beneficial when dealing with economic problems.

I would like to recall President Nursultan Nazarbaev's proposal to include in the agenda of a future session of the General Assembly an item entitled "United Nations reforms — an adequate response to the challenges of the twenty-first century".

One does not have to elaborate on the need to ensure stability and security in the Central Asia region. Kazakstan, as a strategically important State in this region, makes every effort to guarantee tranquillity in Central Asia.

However, the situation in the region defies straightforward assessment. There are zones of tranquillity, including Kazakstan, but there are also zones of conflict. One matter of great concern is the situation in Afghanistan. Further escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan could have negative effects on the situation in Central Asia. We are grateful to the Security Council for paying attention to the situation in that country. There

is no doubt that the Security Council statement of 28 September 1996 is important for the resolution of the situation there. At the same time, we urge the Security Council to take up this item again in order to elaborate measures to stop the conflict.

The situation in Central Asia underscores the need for greater interaction between the region and the United Nations. Such interaction would cause Central Asia to become more involved in international cooperation. Central Asia could undoubtedly contribute to the establishment of a safer world order.

In this regard, we pin great hopes on the establishment by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) of a joint commission for Central Asia. We appreciate the positive United Nations reaction to this initiative of our Head of State.

Kazakstan wants to join the World Trade Organization as soon as possible and is taking concrete steps in this direction.

We are grateful to the United Nations for its support of Kazakstan's proposal concerning the resolution on transit environment in the landlocked States of Central Asia.

We are also pleased at the positive reaction of the United Nations to the initiative of the leaders of the three Central Asian States concerning the formation of a Central Asian peacekeeping battalion. I would like to take this opportunity to state that the Central Asian peacekeeping battalion will be committed to the United Nations Charter and will serve the ideals and purposes of our Organization.

Four years ago, speaking at the United Nations, the President of Kazakstan pointed out the necessity of convening a conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia. It is with deep satisfaction that we can report that our quest for peace and security on the Asian continent is being supported by an ever increasing number of States. Experts are at work on a permanent basis. A conference on Asian security took place at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers. We are especially grateful to the United Nations for its assistance in the implementation of the initiative of our Head of State. Kazakstan regards the convocation of this conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia as its contribution to United Nations global peacekeeping efforts.

Kazakstan fully supports the peace-making activities of the United Nations in different parts of the world. We have no doubt that the United Nations should play a priority role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our common task is to prevent United Nations peace-making functions from being delegated to any other organizations. The diminished peace-making potential of the United Nations is not its fault, but its misfortune.

Kazakstan believes that United Nations peace-making activities could be rendered more effective through a more precise formulation and strengthening of the missions' mandates. They could thereby make a significant contribution to the resolution of crisis situations.

When we talk about international issues we cannot ignore a trend as alarming as the growth of secessionism. This phenomenon has become one of the major causes of crisis situations in the world, particularly in the post-Soviet context. We think that the United Nations must pay close attention to the destructive consequences of aggressive secessionism. The time has come to put an end to the absolute right of nations to self-determination. Basically, the world has already realized the right to self-determination; further continuation of this process will create new trouble spots and lead to more bloodshed. The current world order should rest on the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. If we really care about the stability of the current world order we must firmly reject any manifestation of secessionism. Our highest values should be the peace, well-being and happiness of peoples, and we can achieve these goals not by instigating peoples to self-determination but by creating appropriate conditions for the sustainable economic development of all nations.

From this lofty rostrum it is impossible to ignore another problem that brings great pain to humankind, a pain which our country feels especially acutely. I am referring to environmental disasters. There may be no other place in the world where such vast territories are affected by the consequences of these disasters. Indeed, more than half of Kazakstan's territory could be declared an environmental disaster area. However, it is not only a matter of territories, but people who are still suffering. The Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the Aral Sea have become disaster areas of global dimensions. Furthermore, we should not forget that Kazakstan has been the site of chemical and biological weapons tests.

All these problems require priority attention from the United Nations. During economic transition, even large States cannot cope alone with environmental problems of such magnitude. It is also important to remember that it is innocent people who suffer, not the ones who created or tested these lethal weapons. They are the victims of the arms race between the two opposing systems, victims of the totalitarian thinking of the cold war period. They have every right to demand the attention of international organizations and donor countries.

We cannot say that the United Nations has been indifferent to the consequences of the environmental disasters in Kazakstan. But, at the same time, we cannot claim that the victims of these environmental disasters have felt practical results of the activities of international missions. We are grateful to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank for the elaboration of large-scale programmes for the rehabilitation of the Aral Sea zone. At the same time, we are looking forward to a more active execution of these programmes. Meanwhile, the situation in this region, as well as in other environmental disaster areas, remains extremely serious.

Kazakstan welcomes and supports the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly to convene a special session on environment and sustainable development in the middle of next year. We hope that this forum will adopt meaningful decisions on environmental problems that also affect our country.

This century, which has witnessed two world wars, the collapse of the colonial system and the disintegration of the socialist system, has begun a new phase. This phase has new dimensions, both geo-political and geo-economic.

In politics, a trend towards the globalization of international problems has been apparent. With the end of the cold war, the problems of nuclear non-proliferation have not been solved. The problem of environmental security has acquired global dimensions. The globalization of communications has triggered illegal trafficking in weapons, drugs and money of giant proportions. A new information realm has been formed in which national borders have become merely symbolic.

Previously unknown methods of production have emerged, increasingly referred to as "computer civilization". Scientific research and technological factors have grown in importance as never before. New technologies have become the hottest items in world markets. The role of a State in world economic ties is changing; it is no longer the dominant institute. International institutes function as independent international economic entities.

It is with this list of problems, which is far from being complete, that we are entering the next century. We have yet to sort them out and find optimal ways to adapt to new realities which will be facing us in the twenty-first century. We have to admit that humankind, creating these problems through its activities, still cannot find adequate ways to solve them.

That is why we turn to the United Nations. Our common home is becoming a quintessence of the human mind. We have to help the United Nations reach a new level in dealing with global trends. A renewed Organization, promptly reacting to the challenges of today, will not only enrich itself but will also give us a sense of confidence on the eve of the next century.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Lieutenant-General Mompati S. Merafhe, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Botswana.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana): I am delighted to extend to the President and his country, Malaysia, the sincere congratulations of the Government and the people of Botswana on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. His record as an accomplished diplomat has the admiration of my delegation. He can therefore count on the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Botswana in the discharge of his demanding responsibilities.

We salute his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his successful stewardship of the fiftieth session and the Special Commemorative Meeting.

The last five years have been the most momentous in the history of the United Nations, imposing on the world body enormous responsibilities, which the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the Secretariat have carried out with a deep sense of commitment and dedication. We assure them that they continue to enjoy the confidence and full support of Botswana in the execution of their duties.

The African continent continues to make commendable progress in the consolidation of freedom and democracy. This year the continent witnessed the

successful holding of multi-party elections in Benin, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The right of citizens to organize themselves and participate freely in the political processes of their countries, and respect for human rights, form the basis for stability, democracy and development.

Indeed, the continent has increasingly embraced these universal values, which are an integral part of a democratic culture. Not only has Africa embraced political pluralism, accountability and good governance, it has also demonstrated its readiness to defend these principles.

A year ago we expected that the people of Angola would by now have started a new chapter of peace in the history of their country. It is regrettable that to date the way forward remains unclear. We strongly call upon those who have contributed to the current stalemate in Angola to see reason and show more commitment to the peace process. Two days ago the Heads of State and Government of southern Africa met in Luanda, Angola, in an effort to persuade all concerned to ensure the speedy implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

We are deeply concerned about the situation in Burundi. The country is wallowing in a quagmire of self-destruction. No amount of reasoning and persuasion has thus far succeeded in drawing the political leaders in Burundi away from a path of mutual annihilation and to the path of accommodation and reconciliation.

We salute the efforts of the regional leaders and of the international community aimed at ensuring the restoration of democracy and constitutional order in Burundi. That sister country deserves some reprieve from the traumatic experience it has recently gone through. Burundi needs peace and stability now, not tomorrow.

While the situation in Rwanda remains tense, there are some encouraging signs that the country is making steady progress towards normalcy. Preparations for next year's general elections seem to be well under way.

We urge the international community to spare no effort in encouraging that country towards national reconciliation. Key among the necessary measures to be undertaken is the safe return of refugees to their homeland.

Despite all efforts by the international community, and by West Africa in particular, the political crisis in Liberia has so far eluded solution. We call upon all the parties concerned to ensure that elections are held in May 1997 as scheduled.

In our view, and in reality, Western Sahara poses a major political and moral problem. Botswana is committed to the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum for the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the Settlement Plan. We are deeply concerned that the identification process has been in a state of paralysis for several months now.

Somalia continues to haunt the conscience of the world. The situation in that country is a tragic demonstration of how a disparate assortment of gunmen can hijack and destroy a nation. The United Nations should not consider Somalia a lost cause. We should therefore persevere in the search for a comprehensive settlement to the political crisis in that country.

Recent developments in the Middle East are a matter of profound concern to Botswana. Starting in September 1993 we were pleased to witness the dramatic unfolding of a promising peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, on the one hand, and between Israel and Jordan, on the other. We looked forward to the resumption of negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours, Syria and Lebanon, which, hopefully, would have ushered in a lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Recent events in the occupied Arab territories are a stark indicator of what can happen to the peace process if things are allowed to drag on and on. We appeal to the Government of Israel to fulfil its obligations under the agreements it signed with the Palestinians.

Developments on the Korean peninsula have also been a matter of grave concern. Botswana is committed to the peaceful reunification of Korea.

Botswana follows developments in Cyprus with keen interest. The continued division of Cyprus is a serious violation of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of a Member State of the United Nations.

Land-mines, particularly anti-personnel land-mines, are a major threat to humanity. Botswana strongly believes that the solution to the menace of anti-personnel land-mines lies in a total ban on production, stockpiling, export and use. Existing protocols have provided only a partial solution to this problem. There is a glaring need

for a binding international legal instrument for the progressive and ultimate elimination of these weapons.

The production, stockpiling and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, of which nuclear weapons are the most lethal, is also a matter of deep concern to my delegation. For far too long, non-nuclear-weapon States have been calling for an international legal instrument to safeguard them against the threat or use of these weapons. The response of the nuclear Powers has been less than reassuring, to say the least. Unilateral statements on security assurances, which have been transmitted through a Security Council resolution, do not meet the demands of the overwhelming majority of the membership of this Organization.

The security of non-nuclear-weapon States from the threat or use of these dangerous weapons can only be guaranteed by the institution of a legally binding international instrument. Botswana is committed to the early conclusion of such an instrument, and we hope that the nuclear-weapon States will demonstrate the necessary commitment to meet the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States.

Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons commits parties, *inter alia*, to reach agreement

> "on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Unfortunately, the nuclear-weapon States are resolutely opposed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Not only are these States resistant to this noble ideal, but they continue to develop new types of weapons. What conclusions are we expected to draw from this state of affairs?

It is difficult for nuclear-weapon States to claim the moral high ground to dissuade any State from acquiring the same weapons for the defence of its supreme national interests, while they themselves consider such weapons a reliable means of self-defence. Nuclear-weapon States should accept their responsibility to enter into and conclude negotiations for the elimination of these weapons.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called upon the Conference on Disarmament to accelerate consideration of the question of the expansion of its membership. We thus call upon the Conference on Disarmament to address speedily the question of its expansion to the satisfaction of the general membership of the United Nations.

Five years have passed since the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was adopted by the General Assembly. While we all applauded the adoption of the New Agenda, it has to be accepted that the necessary operational framework was never put in place to ensure effective mobilization and disbursement of the target resources.

Concerned about the poor performance of the United Nations New Agenda, in March this year the Secretary-General launched the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which has the backing of the World Bank, among others. The Initiative envisages an expenditure of some $25 billion over a 10-year period to address identified sectoral development priorities. This is a laudable Initiative which should afford Africa the opportunity to address effectively the critical nexus of food security, population and the environment.

For their part, most African countries have met their obligations as spelled out in national structural adjustment programmes, in addition to the efforts made in the fields of democracy, human rights and good governance. Although southern Africa today enjoys relative peace and stability, it will continue to need special assistance in order to address the problems of reconstruction and development of the economic, physical and social infrastructures which were destroyed or adversely affected by many years of war and racial injustice. We have no doubt that the international community will complement our efforts so that we can launch our region on a firm road to regional integration and economic development.

Botswana is a strong proponent of the reform and restructuring of the United Nations. My President, who is a member of the Secretary-General's United Nations Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development, firmly believes in a more action-oriented and streamlined United Nations system that is able to deliver. But we do not agree with those who advocate a "cut-cut" approach. There could be areas where additional staff could be the catalyst to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency. What the world needs is a United Nations that has the capacity to implement its programmes and projects effectively and efficiently, a United Nations that can put to better use the human and material resources at its disposal and one that can better

guarantee international peace and security and promote international understanding.

It should be noted that the responsibility for the reform process, to a large extent, lies squarely with Member States and not with the Secretary-General, although he has a contribution to make in the whole process. Member States should therefore take full responsibility for their inability to reach agreement on various aspects of the reform process and desist from seeking scapegoats for their failure to reach consensus on a multifaceted international and structural reform of the Organization.

Botswana and other countries in southern Africa have not been spared the scourge of illicit drug trafficking and consumption. The Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community recently signed, among other instruments, a protocol on illicit drug trafficking. The aim is to pool our resources — such as police forces, customs authorities and drug enforcement agencies — to fight drug trafficking and other cross-border crimes effectively. We look forward to continued international cooperation in this regard. We are hopeful that these efforts will be crowned with success and will receive the full support and cooperation of the international community.

The human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome pandemic is another scourge of our time and a serious threat to humanity. The socio-economic consequences of the disease are a matter of grave concern, and the international community should make concerted efforts to address this human tragedy — which affects the young and the productive sectors of our societies in particular — before it is too late.

To conclude, my delegation reaffirms its total confidence in the stewardship of the President of the General Assembly and pledges its loyalty and cooperation. We reaffirm our commitment to work with other delegations towards the strengthening of the United Nations. We reaffirm our confidence in the manner in which the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, manages the affairs of our Organization. We salute him for his visionary leadership and untiring commitment to duty.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.